People you know

John Corrie, making music

By Katyrn Sleeton

STAFF WRITER

Lewiston — John Corrie speaks with a genuine passion for singing and teaching about the power of music and how it can shape the lives of others.

And he practices with an accent that’s... Interesting! Something like this?

"I try to make it fun, because I believe music has the power to transcend languages and cultures," said Corrie.

The longtime Bates College professor and music director for the Maine Music Society, said that every day he gets to share his passion for music.

"What I love about this is a true love of music, and also challenging the traditional concepts of what music is and what it can be. I believe music has the power to bring people together. It’s a way to connect with others and to express emotions," Corrie said.

"My family has been involved in community music for years, and we've always been passionate about sharing the joy of music with others," he said.

"There were six of us, and we all sang the Jingle Bells church, and we would sing our favorite songs. One crazy night, we rode in the car in 100 degrees, and drove to Maine with a radio in the car, so we sang the whole way."

Former flute player Rebecca, while studying at Oberlin College in Ohio, and coming to Bates for the first time in 1987 on her honeymoon.

The couple moved to Lewiston in 1988 when Rebecca accepted a job teaching arts and music at Bates College. John started teaching music singing and instruction at that same year.

"Rebecca, who plays harpsichord, organ, and piano, is a friend and works with Frank Clark, a Baptist pastor who led this year just before he was set to perform at the Festival of Sacred Music concert. Everyone, he says, starts out and gets better with age, but I’m convinced that keyboard players push off the piano into a lesser life. Erica Green was a great example — it was surprising how they treated them. It’s very unfortunate roles, it has to be.

"Corrie looked at the bluffs at St. Har- thukrewek’s Religious Church in Pemi- nsett and at the Maine Music Society. On Friday evening, he’ll also perform with MMR’s chamber singers at Art Walk.

"Students expand my horizons," he said. "I get introduced to all kinds of stuff by the students, like Adele. You have to listen to, listen to Adele, it’s a two-step street. I find it odd when I find some student who doesn’t have much. You just want to go, Well, what are you working on?"

Among his projects are pulling together two concerts for next spring: one for Maine Music Society around the work of Billy Joel, and another for a major city. With collaborations involving singers and musicians at Bates.

Maine Music Society, the Holdens of St. Peter and Paul, and Lewiston and Auburn high schools, to be performed at Bates Hall.

The two choirs together will perform “Messiah” and “Good Night’s Praise” by Beethoven.

"I feel high school students can gain experience performing with an orchestra and it’s a great way for them to find their voice," Corrie said. "The educational benefits are there in their college days. It’s a closer relationship, and part of their other passion: cooking."

"I’ve found a really good recipe for a green cheese..." he said.

"Know someone... Contact staff writer Katyrn Sleeton at 668-3844 or Ksleeton@langhamjournal.com"